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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The 50th Anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution began on October 23, 1956; the sacrifices of the brave Hungarian Freedom Fighters and the great contributions of Hungarian-Americans in Illinois reaffirm the friendship between the people and governments of the United States and Hungary; and

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WHEREAS, On October 23, 1956, hundreds of thousands of Hungarians from all walks of life would join university students in a peaceful call for democracy and an end to the brutal and oppressive Soviet-dominated Hungarian communist government; and

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WHEREAS, Peaceful protestors were fired upon by the Hungarian Security Police killing hundreds and triggering the bloody fight for freedom and democracy and causing the first tear in the Iron Curtain; and

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WHEREAS, The Hungarian Freedom Fighters, students, workers, men, women and children, who rose up against impossible odds and risked their lives to take part in their noble fight for freedom and democracy, were able to establish a revolutionary government that released political prisoners, including major church leaders, took steps to establish a multi-party democracy, called for the withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Hungary, announced Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, and requested United Nations assistance in establishing Hungarian neutrality; and

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WHEREAS, The Soviet Union launched a massive military counteroffensive against the revolt, sending tens of thousands of additional troops from the Soviet Union and launched air strikes, artillery bombardments, and coordinated tank-infantry actions involving some 6,000 tanks which, remarkably, the

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1 outnumbered and under-equipped Hungarian Army and Hungarian  
2 Freedom Fighters resisted for several days; and

3 WHEREAS, Prime Minister Imre Nagy was seized by Soviet  
4 security forces, despite assurances of safe passage for him to  
5 leave the Yugoslav Embassy in Budapest where he sought asylum,  
6 was taken to Rumania and subsequently tried and executed; and

7 WHEREAS, Thousands of Hungarians were tortured, tried, and  
8 executed by the post-1956 Hungarian government; and

9 WHEREAS, More than 200,000 Hungarians fled their country in  
10 the aftermath of the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian  
11 uprising, and over 47,000 of these people eventually were able  
12 to settle in the United States where they have contributed  
13 greatly to the intellectual strength, cultural diversity, and  
14 the economic might of this country; and

15 WHEREAS, The uprising of the Hungarian people in 1956  
16 dramatically confirmed the widespread contempt in which the  
17 Hungarians held the Soviet Union and the underlying weakness of  
18 the communist system imposed by Soviet authorities in Central  
19 and Eastern Europe, as well as the strength of popular support  
20 for democratic principles and the right of the Hungarian people  
21 to determine their own national destiny; and

22 WHEREAS, The 1956 Hungarian Revolution unmasked the true  
23 nature of the Soviet system, contributing to the disintegration  
24 of communist parties in the West and across the globe; and

25 WHEREAS, The Hungarians in 1989 dismantled the Iron Curtain  
26 and permitted East Germans safe passage to the West, actions  
27 that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall; and

28 WHEREAS, On October 23, 1989, the Republic of Hungary  
29 proclaimed its independence, and in 1990 the Hungarian

1 Parliament officially designated October 23 as a Hungarian  
2 national holiday, indicating that the legacy of the 1956  
3 Revolution continues to inspire Hungarians to this day; and

4 WHEREAS, On March 12, 1999, the Government of Hungary,  
5 reflecting the will of the Hungarian people, acceded to the  
6 North Atlantic Treaty and became a member of NATO and on May 1,  
7 2004; Hungary then became a full member of the European Union;  
8 therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL  
10 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, we commend the people of  
11 Hungary as they mark the 50th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian  
12 Revolution which set the stage for the ultimate collapse of  
13 communism in 1989 throughout Central and Eastern Europe,  
14 including Hungary, and two years later in the Soviet Union  
15 itself, and therefore it is fitting and appropriate to proclaim  
16 October 23, 2006, as "Hungarian Freedom Day" with appropriate  
17 ceremonies and activities; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That we expresses thanks to the freedom fighters  
19 for their bravery in the face of insurmountable odds, many of  
20 whom sacrificed their lives for freedom, and to those refugees  
21 that brought their talents, skills, and love of freedom and  
22 helped build a stronger America; we express our condolences to  
23 the people of Hungary and the families who lost loved ones in  
24 the fight for Hungarian freedom and independence in 1956 and  
25 those executed by the Soviet and Hungarian communist  
26 authorities in the five years following the Revolution; we  
27 congratulate the American Hungarian Federation, founded in  
28 1906, which played a key role in the resettlement of Hungarian  
29 refugees and in illuminating the abuses of the post-1956  
30 Hungarian government, and whose members, many of whom are 1956  
31 Freedom Fighters, continue to work toward promoting freedom and  
32 democracy, on its centennial anniversary; we reaffirm the  
33 friendship and cooperative relations between the governments

1 of Hungary and the United States and between the Hungarian and  
2 American people; we encourage the Governor to issue a  
3 proclamation calling upon the people of Illinois to observe  
4 "Hungarian Freedom Day" with appropriate ceremonies and  
5 activities; and be it further

6       RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
7 presented to those who continue to promote freedom and  
8 democracy in Hungary.